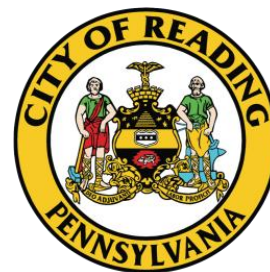


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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**City Halts Quality of Life Citations for Snow Removal**

**Reading, PA - March 4, 2015** - Reading, PA - The City of Reading, and the entire Northeast, has experienced one of the worst winters in recent memories. With an average high temperature for the month of February of 30 and a low average of 12, the weather has not been on our side for snow removal. Temperatures did not rise enough for any of the footprint trodden snow to melt, instead the bottom layer of all sidewalks throughout the City, whether city-owned or privately owned, has become a layer of ice that we are still working to remove.

A statement made by Ralph Johnson earlier this week has been misinterpreted. The City does not choose between plowing and shoveling, but instead makes its decisions on which snow to remove first based on what makes the largest impact on the safety of our citizens.

Ralph Johnson, Director of Public Works, commented, "The safety of our citizens is our top priority. We start with the major roadways, making sure that people can drive safely throughout the City. After that, we shovel the sidewalks of all the bridges in the City, and then we work on all the sidewalks outside of regular use facilities – like the libraries, fire stations, recreation centers, and public services offices."

The City's Administration recognizes that it's going to take a team effort to remove the snow and ice from all city sidewalks and roadways. Employees from all departments in City Hall are being asked to volunteer to help clear the City's properties. Ron Natale, Property Maintenance Division Manager, is pulling together a team of property maintenance inspectors who have volunteered their time tomorrow to hit the streets with the Public Works Department to get the City's sidewalks clear.

Citizens are being asked to join this city-wide effort by making sure that your sidewalks are clear and that your handicapped and elderly neighbors have the help they need to get their sidewalks cleared off as well. The City understands the physical limitations of our elderly and disabled citizens. In order to give them the time to get the help they need, as of today, no Quality of Life citations will be given for lack of snow removal in the City of Reading until further notice.

Citizens are urged to take necessary precautions to protect themselves from injury as they clear snow and storm related debris. You can help the overall recovery by doing the following:

- Wear appropriate clothing like gloves/mittens, hats, scarves and snow boots when working or playing outside. Dress in several layers of loose-fitting clothing and cover your face and mouth if possible.

- To avoid doing double work, shovel snow from your driveways and sidewalks after the streets have been plowed.
- Check on neighbors, especially the elderly or people who are disabled or with medical needs.
- Consider clearing snow from around the fire hydrants in your neighborhood to assist with overall neighborhood preparedness.

We remind residents that they will need to adhere to City Code which requires removal of snow and ice from sidewalks in, at least, a 36 inch path and 36 inches from every fire hydrant located on their property. When clearing snow, it should not be thrown in the street or in any loading or unloading areas of public transportation.

Also per City ordinance, reserving parking spaces on public streets is not permitted. We understand that clearing a parking space is an arduous task during a heavy storm, but we remind you that the use of chairs, buckets and/or any other material to reserve parking spaces on public streets is illegal and prohibited.

"I'd like to thank the citizens of Reading for their patience and cooperation throughout the whole month of February and for being our eyes and ears on the streets. While our crews are out constantly monitoring the roads, we cannot be on every street at once, so we appreciate the assistance of the citizens who have called in to report areas that require immediate attention," said Mayor Vaughn D. Spencer.

"Our role as your municipal government is to build trust and confidence in the services we provide," Spencer continued. "Over the past month, I have received many emails and messages from residents highlighting the great work our city has done to keep citizens safe. But we have also learned where we need to make some improvements in terms of our weather emergency planning, vague language in our ordinances, and how we communicate with our partner agencies and subsequently get that information to our residents, I believe February has also demonstrated how we can work and come together to serve our residents in times of crisis."

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